



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RELEASES FIRST NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CHILD EXPLOITATION PREVENTION AND INTERDICTION Task Force Has Success Targeting Offenders

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Eric Holder today announced the release of the Department of Justice’s first National Strategy for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction. The strategy also provides the first comprehensive threat assessment of the dangers facing children from child pornography, online enticement, child sex tourism, commercial sexual exploitation, and sexual exploitation in Indian Country, and outlines a blueprint to strengthen the fight against these crimes.

Ronald C. Machen Jr., U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, praised the strategy, which builds upon the department’s accomplishments in combating child exploitation by establishing specific, aggressive goals and priorities and by increasing cooperation and collaboration at all levels of government and the private sector.

As part of the overall strategy, the U.S. Marshals Service is launching a nationwide operation targeting the top 500 most dangerous, non-compliant sex offenders in the nation. Additionally, the department will create a national database to allow federal, state, tribal, local and international law enforcement partners to better coordinate their cases with each other, engage in undercover operations from a portal facilitated or hosted by the database, share information and intelligence and conduct analysis on dangerous offenders and future threats and trends. The department also created 38 additional Assistant U.S. Attorney positions to devote to child exploitation cases, and over the coming months will work to fill the vacancies and train the new assistants in this specialized area.

“Although we’ve made meaningful progress in protecting children across the country, and although we’ve brought a record number of offenders to justice in recent years, it is time to renew our commitment to this work. It is time to intensify our efforts,” said Attorney General Holder. “This new Strategy provides the roadmap necessary to do just that – to streamline our education, prevention and prosecution activities; to improve information sharing and collaboration; and to make the most effective use of limited resources. Together, we are sending an important message – that the U.S. government, and our nation’s

Department of Justice, has never been more committed to protecting our children and to bringing offenders to justice.”

U.S. Attorney Machen and other top officials in Washington, D.C. pledged their full support.

“We are committed to doing everything we can to prosecute the criminals who prey on our children,” Machen said. “We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to stop predators from harming and exploiting our society’s most vulnerable victims. The people who commit these despicable acts should know that we will aggressively apply the full force of the law to their conduct.”

Edwin D. Sloane, Acting U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia, said his investigators will continue to target those who violate the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, which makes it a federal crime for sex offenders to knowingly fail to comply with their sex offender registration requirements. In a new initiative, dubbed Project Sentinel/Operation Guardian, the U.S. Marshals Service will target the five most dangerous noncompliant sex offenders in each district.

“Our sex offender investigations coordinators have worked very closely with our state and local partners to identify the most dangerous non-compliant sex offenders in the district, and as the Marshals Service is the lead federal law enforcement agency charged with investigating violations of the Adam Walsh Act, it is our intent to track down, apprehend and bring to justice these individuals who have violated their registration requirements,” Sloane said.

The national strategy analyzed the threat to our nation’s children and described the current efforts at all levels of the government against this threat. Since FY 2006, the Department of Justice has filed 8,464 Project Safe Childhood (PSC) cases against 8,637 defendants. These cases include prosecutions of online enticement of children to engage in sexual activity, interstate transportation of children to engage in sexual activity, production, distribution and possession of child pornography, and other offenses.

In Washington, D.C., a task force aimed at protecting children from online exploitation and abuse has successfully prosecuted numerous offenders as part of Project Safe Childhood in recent years. The FBI/MPD Child Exploitation Task Force is an initiative of the Washington Field Office of the FBI, the Metropolitan Police Department and U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia. Since January 1, 2010, 13 people have been charged with various offenses, including possession, receipt, transportation and distribution of child pornography and attempting to entice a minor into engaging in illicit sexual activity. In 2009, 24 Project Safe Childhood cases were filed in the District of Columbia.

In one recent case, a university researcher from North Carolina was sentenced in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to more than 27 years in prison for producing child pornography. In another federal prosecution here, a Florida woman was sentenced to 15 years in prison for producing and distributing child pornography. Like many of the task force’s investigations, the arrests came after the defendants engaged in online chats with an undercover investigator.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia also offers help to those harmed by such

crimes through its Victim Witness Assistance Unit, which has a team of specially trained advocates who work with victims of physical and sexual abuse and exploitation. The advocates help children and their families reduce the trauma they have experienced as a result of the crime, familiarize children with court procedures through the “Kids Court” program, and refer them to critical service care providers who can assist them in obtaining the help they need to cope with the effects of the crime.

In addition, the office works in close partnership with the D.C. Children’s Advocacy Center, which was established in 1994 to provide a coordinated, child-friendly approach to the investigation and prosecution of civil and criminal child abuse cases. The U.S. Attorney’s Office’s forensic interviewer is co-located at the Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC), where she works collaboratively with other interviewers from the CAC to conduct interviews of child victims of physical or sexual abuse, in a manner designed to minimize any further trauma to the child.

Children’s Advocacy Center and U.S. Attorney’s Office staff members are part of a multi-disciplinary team that includes representatives from law enforcement and legal, social services, medical, and mental health agencies. The team conducts regular case reviews to coordinate investigations, joint forensic interviews and trauma assessments and also provides therapy referrals and support for children.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia also investigates and prosecutes cases involving commercial sexual exploitation of children, working closely with its partners on the multi-agency D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force. Comprised of the U.S. Attorney’s Office, federal and local law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations, the purpose of this task force is to facilitate a coordinated anti-trafficking effort in the Washington, D.C. area through protocol development, extensive community outreach, proactive investigations, law enforcement training, intelligence sharing, and formalized partnerships. The task force helps to identify citizen, resident and transnational victims of all forms of sex and labor trafficking and to provide comprehensive services to trafficking victims and increases the prosecution of traffickers.

Despite vigorously fighting all aspects of child exploitation, the Justice Department recognizes that more work remains to be done across the nation in this area. To that end, the department’s strategy lays out goals to increase coordination among the nation’s investigators, better train investigators and prosecutors, advance law enforcement’s technological capabilities and enhance research to inform decisions on deterrence, incarceration and monitoring. The strategy also includes a renewed commitment to public awareness and community outreach.

As part of its public outreach efforts, the department today re-launched [ProjectSafeChildhood.gov](https://www.projectsafechildhood.gov), the Project Safe Childhood (PSC) public website. PSC is a department initiative launched in 2006 that aims to combat the proliferation of technology-facilitated sexual exploitation crimes against children. Led by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, PSC marshals federal, state, tribal and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims.

For more information regarding the National Strategy to Combat Child Exploitation, Prevention and Interdiction, please visit: www.projectsafefchildhood.gov/docs/natstrategyreport.pdf.

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